Published and Copyright (c) 1999 - 2010
All Rights Reserved

Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor
Rob Mahlert, Associate Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"
Albert Dayes -- "CC: Classic Chips"
Rob Mahlert -- Web site
Thomas J. Andrews -- "Keeper of the Flame"

With Contributions by:

Fred Horvat

To subscribe to A-ONE, change e-mail addresses, or unsubscribe, log on to our website at: www.atarinews.org and click on "Subscriptions".
OR subscribe to A-ONE by sending a message to: dpj@atarinews.org and your address will be added to the distribution list.
To unsubscribe from A-ONE, send the following: Unsubscribe A-ONE
Please make sure that you include the same address that you used to subscribe from.

To download A-ONE, set your browser bookmarks to one of the following sites:

http://people.delphiforums.com/dpj/a-one.htm
Now available:
http://www.atarinews.org

Visit the Atari Advantage Forum on Delphi!
http://forums.delphiforums.com/atari/

=~=~=~=

A-ONE #1234 08/20/10

~ Social Networking Ills ~ People Are Talking! ~ Intel Buys McAfee!
~ More Facebook Malware! ~ 'Dislike' Button Scam! ~ New Ika-tako Virus!
~ PS3 With More Memory! ~ Gaming: 3D Next Boost? ~ Dumb German Robber!

~ ISP’s Top Data Hogs! ~ Internet Explorer Is 15 ~ AOL’s Patch Network!

-* Laptop Spy Case: No Charges! *-
-* Congress Stirs Net Neutrality Issue *-
-* Big Surprise, AT&T Supports Net Neutrality *-

=~=~=~=

->From the Editor’s Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

We may, finally, get a relative cool-down over the next week. Sure, the summer is winding down so this is no real treat other than it could mean a break from all of this heat and humidity. Hmmm, if I remember from last summer, I was then complaining about all of the rain we were having! Sure could use some of that wet stuff now! It’s hard to believe that Labor Day is about two weeks away! Wasn’t I just clamoring about Memorial Day weekend barbecues...?

Last week, I mentioned that I threw in a lot of articles that pertained to net neutrality. I must admit, this topic has been in the news for quite a long time. There’s a plan, and then there’s no plan from the FCC. Now, all of the sudden, Google and Verizon come up with a plan of their own for this subject; and it’s grabbing headlines (at least on the internet!).

So, what exactly is "net neutrality"? Well, there are a number of issues surrounding the idea, so let me throw in a definition (or a bunch of ideas) that I found on the internet that will describe the concept a lot better than I probably would write:

Network neutrality (also net neutrality, Internet neutrality) is a principle proposed for user access networks participating in the Internet that advocates no restrictions by Internet Service Providers and governments on content, sites, platforms, on the kinds of equipment that may be attached, and no restrictions on the modes of communication allowed.

The principle states that if a given user pays for a certain level of Internet access, and another user pays for the same level of access, then the two users should be able to connect to each other at the subscribed level of access.

Though the term did not enter popular use until several years later, since the early 2000s advocates of net neutrality and associated rules have raised concerns about the ability of broadband providers to use their last mile infrastructure to block Internet applications and content (e.g., websites, services, protocols), particularly those of competitors. In the US particularly, but elsewhere as well, the possibility of regulations designed to mandate the neutrality of the Internet has been subject to fierce debate.

Neutrality proponents claim that telecom companies seek to impose a tiered service model in order to control the pipeline and thereby remove competition, create artificial scarcity, and oblige subscribers to buy

their otherwise uncompetitive services. Many believe net neutrality to be primarily important as a preservation of current freedoms. Vinton Cerf, considered a "father of the Internet" and co-inventor of the Internet Protocol, Tim Berners-Lee, creator of the Web, and many others have spoken out in favor of network neutrality.

Opponents of net neutrality characterize its regulations as "a solution in search of a problem", arguing that broadband service providers have no plans to block content or degrade network performance. In spite of this claim, certain Internet service providers have intentionally slowed peer-to-peer (P2P) communications. Still other companies have acted in contrast to these assertions of hands-off behavior and have begun to use deep packet inspection to discriminate against P2P, FTP and online games, instituting a cell-phone style billing system of overages, free-to-telecom "value added" services, and bundling. Critics of net neutrality also argue that data discrimination of some kinds, particularly to guarantee quality of service, is not problematic, but is actually highly desirable. Bob Kahn has called the term net neutrality a "slogan" and states that he opposes establishing it, however he admits that he is against the fragmentation of the net whenever this becomes excluding to other participants.

Now, if you read the numerous articles in last week's issue, you'll likely be able to ascertain that there are some similarities in the above to what Verizon and Google are suggesting. But, as far as I'm concerned, there's a lot more involved.

Firstly, why isn't the FCC, the "keeper of the airwaves", continuing with involvement? Secondly, why Verizon and Google? As to the first, I have no idea except I think that the FCC has tried, and failed to come up with a complete concept that can be agreed upon. As to the second: money! Yes, I seriously doubt that these companies would put the time, effort, and money into such a project unless there was something - a lot of something - in it for them. Call me a cynic (I am one), but I just don't see these two having any kind of an altruistic motive.

But read the articles, and look carefully at the ones that pick apart the proposals. You'll start to see what I mean. Now, don't get me wrong, I see some benefits of the concept of net neutrality. However, I don't want to see businesses come up with a plan! With that path, all I can see is more crap and more expense aimed at the end users - us!

Definitely something to keep an eye on, which is what I plan to do for awhile. Like I said earlier, I have a cynical side at times!

Until next time...

=~=~=~=

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Another week has come and gone we're

looking at the end of summer already. Labor Day is but two weeks away, and although it’s been a hot summer here, I find myself wondering where the summer went. I’m sure that there’ll be a few days yes that will make me remember what it’s been like, but for the most part, summer has just been a hotter version of spring.

To quote Arlo Guthrie; "But that’s not what I came to tell ya about..."

One thing that caught my eye this past week... and it wasn’t because of the mainstream media, I can tell you that... was the "SETICon" held in California’s Silicon Valley last weekend.

This was a gathering put together by the SETI (Search for ExtraTerrestrial Intelligence) Institute to celebrate their 50th anniversary. The Institute’s senior astronomer, Seth Shostak, is a very smart scientist and a pretty cool guy, talked a little bit in an interview recently about what could be expected at the SETICon.

The convention shares what some consider to be a weak point with the old OMNI magazine. Remember OMNI? If I remember correctly, it was published by Bob Guccioni, the publisher of Penthouse Magazine. No, that isn’t the weak point, just another bit of useless information. The weak point was that OMNI, in addition to hard, solid science articles and features, they also had a decent dose of science fiction. Pretty good science fiction too. But the fact that they DID include fiction tended to sour the more straight-laced readers who preferred scientific journals and, instead of accepting OMNI for what it was, wanted to see it conform to something like a scientific journal, or at least Scientific American Magazine.

Now, I love Sci-Am. It’s a great magazine. It gives me things that other magazines either can’t or don’t. Like Discover Magazine. Another fine publication. But they tend to over-explain things. For instance, I don’t need two paragraphs to explain to me what a hominid is. Sci-Am was of the same cloth, in many ways, as scientific journals in that it doesn’t "dumb down" its writing. I suppose it’s just because it’s right at my level, and I find it strikes "just the right balance", but it doesn’t include Science Fiction, which I dearly love too.

And so it is with SETICon. In addition to hard science, they’re including a healthy dose of SciFi. There were, evidently, appearances by some of the actors from science fiction series talking about what it was like to take part in bringing science fiction to life on the TV screen right along side scientists like Frank Drake (of Drake Equation fame, and organizer of the first SETI search) and Jill Tarter (the real-life inspiration for Ellie Arroway of Carl Sagan’s CONTACT).

There were talks and seminars on where SETI has been and where its going, and fiction/fantasy looks at things we might dare, in our wildest dreams, to allow ourselves to hope for or fear or just think about.

Now, anyone who knows me knows what I big SETI fan I am. I started the Atari Enthusiasts Searching for ET SETI@home group (http://setiathome.berkeley.edu/team_display.php?teamid=30472). I still think it’d be the coolest thing ever to have the first confirmed signal from an intelligence outside our solar system found by an Atari computer user. I have no delusions though. I doubt that the current search will turn up that evidence. There’s just too much to take into account and too much we really don’t know. But that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t try. We are, after all, explorers by nature. Since our very genesis, we’ve been built to reach out, to search and find new things. From the first time man found

that fire would not only keep the night at bay, warm him against the elements and cook his food, we've been set upon the path of finding new things. And here we are, ready to reach out into space. We're standing at the very margin of it. We've been standing there for 60 years now. Debating when to take that next step and "sally forth" into the unknown.

But it's also in our nature to take precautions. We want to know what's out there to meet us before we go, to try to assess the risks and weigh them against the gains.

And so it was at the SETICon too. There were talks by many scientists about why we should not SEND signals to outer space. Why we should be careful and listen only... at least for a while. These aliens... if they should in fact exist, might be hostile. They're likely to be much more advanced than us, possibly immeasurably more advanced. We might be no more than a colony of bees or bacteria to them. Would they have any issues with taking whatever they want... be it water or precious metals or slave women... because we're not at their level?

Our own history is jam-packed with examples of this kind of behavior. The European incursion into the western hemisphere is but one example. North and South American natives were subjugated under the rule of the Europeans simply because they were less advanced and, therefore, not important. There are many other examples, from India to Hawaii to Australia and New Guinea. So what makes us think that 'aliens' would be any kinder to us?

The "other side", however, argues that any civilization advanced enough to send signals that we can intercept and recognize as patently artificial would be more likely to be "more evolved" and therefore, they reason, more paternal and helpful.

Plus, they add, the energy necessary to visit Earth from far away... even as close as the nearest star... 4.3 light years (25,278,109,000,000 miles) is so immense that it simply wouldn't be worth it for a civilization to come here simply to loot the planet.

The other side replies that if this hypothetical alien society actually exists, they might possess technology that we can't even imagine. They might have a knowledge of physics that supersedes ours to such a huge extent that it IS worth their while.

The other other side then replies that it that was the case they'd probably also be able to do whatever they please regardless and wouldn't NEED our resources. After all, there's no shortage of water, heavy/precious metals, or even diamonds in space. We ourselves are looking at mining asteroids for things.

But in my mind, the single over-riding factor in this discussion is that, whether we like it or not, it's a moot point. We have been "beaming" information out into space for more than 70 years now. Our television signals, and now our microwave transmissions, have been flying away from Earth at the speed of light. If there is an intelligence more advanced than ours out there that is both capable of and inclined to look, they will certainly notice us eventually. The horse has left the barn, so to speak. It makes little sense to argue the point now.

But back to actual 'SETI'. Searching for that unmistakable signal from outer space. What will we do if we find it? We won't be able to understand anything contained in the signal... at least not at first... but the simple knowledge that we are not alone... that there's someone else out

there, not even taking into account the fright and anxiety sure to ensue from some quarters.

And what about the religious implications? There are those who believe that Earth is alone in having intelligent life, because their particular holy book says nothing about any little "side projects" the Creator might have had going on. How will they react?

I mean, take a look at what's going on right now. We have one religious group that wants to turn a building they own into a place of worship. Others oppose it because it's just two blocks from "Ground Zero", the site upon which the twin towers of the World Trade Center used to stand. Unless you've been living in a cave for the past nine years you know that the towers were destroyed by a group of extremists associated (at least from their viewpoint) with the former religious group.

We cannot even agree on the 'propriety' of building a place of worship in the vicinity of a horrible attack, how can we hope to deal with the knowledge that we are not alone in the Universe and that we've pretty much given anyone who cares to listen a map of where to find us and a pretty good idea of our present technological abilities.

I'm not foolish enough to believe either that such knowledge would push us completely in one direction or the other; that it would make us either reclusive and afraid of being subjugated as we have subjugated others, or prod us to take that next leap into the darkness of space to meet what's out there, but obviously we'll have to cross that bridge when and if we come to it.

Well, that's it for this time around, Earthlings. Tune in again next week, same time, same station. Until then, be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

=~=~=~=

->In This Week's Gaming Section - Will 3D Be Next Big Boost?
""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""" PlayStation 3, More Memory!
THQ Hoping for Artists!

=~=~=~=

->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

Gaming Giants Bet on 3D for Next Big Boost

The global gaming industry is jumping on Hollywood’s 3D bandwagon but the bet is risky as consumers appear reluctant to shell out for the necessary screens and glasses, insiders said Wednesday.

At the start of Gamescom, Europe’s biggest trade fair for interactive games and entertainment in the western German city of Cologne, market leaders were trotting out new creations with images that appear to leap off the screen.

Driving a racing car on a three-dimensional track while parked on the sofa or playing tennis and seeing the ball spin in the air in front of you in your living room - Japanese behemoth Sony was showing off how it is transforming the gaming experience.

"We already have a leading market share in 3D TV," said Kazuo Hirai, CEO of Sony Computer Entertainment, referring to a small but growing segment of the multi-billion-dollar market.

"Still the number of units has to increase a lot. In order for that to happen, we need to have exciting software, broadcast TV in 3D, motion pictures available in 3D - on blue ray, and also video games."

Consumer electronics makers are aiming to ride a wave of interest in 3D technology thanks to recent movies such as the sci-fi blockbuster "Avatar".

Sony expected 10 percent of the TVs it sells this year will be 3D-compatible and is working on technology that does not require glasses.

Industry experts say a wide array of game titles is crucial to convincing consumers to invest around 1,500 euros (1,935 dollars) in a compatible screen and a pair of 3D glasses.

Hirai said games were easier to develop that movies in 3D because everything is computer-generated in the first place.

But a 3D game costs about 20 percent more to produce than a standard one, said Olivier Wolff, senior vice president of Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment’s international games division, a unit of the Hollywood studio.

He said Warner had also placed 3D at the "heart of its strategy" but acknowledged that the market would need another two to three years to take off.

Wolff said that by then, one household in 10 in major markets would have a 3D television and that one in five of Warner’s games would be in 3D.

The priority is to develop racing and combat games as they offer the most intense immersive viewing experience, Wolff said, promising new 3D games for the "Lord of the Rings" and "Mortal Kombat" series.

"With the 3D, we put more attention into the things that are between the player and the camera," said Ed Boon, developer of "Mortal Kombat," a wildly popular urban street fighting series.

"You don’t want plants in the foreground that will obstruct the gameplay, it’s just a question of balance. Because you have to see the game."

Matt Southern, director of development on the 3D "Motorstorm 3" game for

Sony, said that game designers were wise not to go overboard with the new technology or risk alienating players, not to mention giving them headaches.

"We have to be very, very careful to test the game and be sure that the 3D is functioning well in terms of gameplay and for the visuals," he said.

"You have to find a balance between what you can imagine and what would be comfortable and enjoyable."

Many experts think consumers are unlikely to rush to buy the premium-priced 3D TVs due to the need for special glasses and because many people have already upgraded to high-definition sets in recent years.

Japanese gaming giant Nintendo has opted to develop its own technology and is building a new machine, the 3DS, capable of producing 3D images on a small screen that does not require glasses.

US competitor Microsoft is less enamoured with the possibilities of 3D and is looking at family-friendly alternatives.

"The equipment is not there yet and we see the glasses as a brake on the development of 3D," said Benoit Fouillet, a Microsoft Xbox product manager.

Gamescom runs until Sunday.

Sony Playstation 3 To Come with More Memory

Sony Corp’s Playstation 3 will feature higher-capacity hard drives in North America this fall to let consumers download more games and entertainment, the company said on Tuesday.

The game console will come with about 33 percent more storage capacity than previous versions, but at least one analyst said that it is not likely to be a major selling point for consumers.

"In the greater scheme of things, it means nothing. Every year the price of storage goes down so the average storage in any given device goes up," said Daniel Ernst, analyst with Hudson Square Research.

Sony said the new models of the Playstation 3 will include one with 320 gigabytes of memory in the PS3 Sports Champions Move bundle, with a suggested retail price of $399.99.

The 160-gigabyte model PS3 system will ship to retailers at the same price as the existing PS3 model, with a suggested retail price of $299.99.

From October, the company will also start selling a 160-gigabyte PS3 in combination with its Move motion-control game system in Europe, it announced at a news conference in Cologne, Germany, a day ahead of Gamescom, Europe’s largest video game trade fair.

This version will cost 299 euros ($384.6), it said, adding that a 320-gigabyte version featuring Move would go on sale September 15 for 349 euros, the same date that Move will launch.

Sony’s announcement marks another step in the war of the three big

consoles - Sony’s Playstation, Nintendo’s Wii and Microsoft’s Xbox 360 - with manufacturers offering new bundles to lure customers away from the competition.

Microsoft announced earlier on Tuesday that it would start selling its Kinect motion-controlling game system in Europe from November 10, in a move to poach gamers away from Sony’s flagship Playstation 3 and Nintendo’s Wii. Motion-controlled gaming is one of the industry’s big hopes.

THQ Hopes To Draw in Artists with Tablet for Wii

Video game publisher THQ Inc. hopes to draw in artistically inclined fans when its uDraw GameTablet is available for the Wii this year.

The $70 add-on accessory to Nintendo Co.’s popular game console is aimed mainly at 6- to 12-year-olds. Players will be able to make drawing and sketches, or play games such as "Pictionary."

Wedbush Morgan analyst Michael Pachter said he’s surprised Nintendo didn’t come out with one on its own. With no marketing, he believes THQ will be able to sell at least 1 million tablets. But if the company can convince customers - starting with the kids, then their parents - that they need the tablet, this number could be much higher.

The GameTablet is 9 inches wide and 7 inches long. To use it, you pop in the Wii’s controller, which also powers the gadget, and use an attached stylus pen to create pictures or play games.

The tablet will come packaged with an art-based game, "uDraw Studio," when it goes on sale ahead of the holidays. "Pictionary" and another game, "Dood’s Big Adventure," will be sold separately for $30 each.

Wayne Cline, project manager of uDraw, said inspiration for the game came from THQ’s doodle game "Drawn to Life: The Next Chapter," as well as from the Wacom tablets that professional artists and designers use to create computer images.

Cline said that drawing with the Wii remote isn’t easy, as it can be hard to hold your hand steady while pointing the controller at the TV screen. The tablet and stylus take care of that.

"UDraw Studio" will come with tutorials, as well as on-screen coloring pages and stamps, Cline said, so players don’t have to be amazing artists to use it. As with professional drawing tablets, uDraw users keep their eyes on their TV screens while drawing on the tablet’s blank screen.

"We’ve found it very intuitive and users quickly learn they can look at the screen and not have to glance down at the GameTablet," Cline said.

The tablet will let players save their finished artwork on a standard SD storage card so they can move their masterpieces to a computer.

=~=~=~=

A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

AT&T's Vote for Google-Verizon Net Neutrality Plan No Surprise

AT&T recently said it supports the Google-Verizon net neutrality plan that would prevent wireless networks from being subject to neutrality regulations.

Ralph de la Vega, CEO of AT&T Mobility, recently called the plan a "reasonable framework." Later, Joan Marsh, AT&T's Vice President of Federal Regulatory, wrote about the proposal and the need for unregulated wireless networks on the
company's public policy blog. "Wireless carriers must to [sic] be able to dynamically manage traffic and operate their networks in an environment free from burdensome, arbitrary and unnecessary regulations," Marsh said.

The Google-Verizon plan, which has drawn critics as well, calls for making the Internet we know today completely neutral for lawful content. This means carriers could not discriminate against or restrict different types of (lawful) data from running through its broadband network. However, the plan would leave wireless networks out of the debate, and allow broadband providers to offer non-neutral specialized broadband services such as medical health monitoring and entertainment content.

AT&T has long been an opponent of net neutrality, arguing there is little evidence that broadband providers needs to be regulated. The company has considered using filtering tools to detect pirated material on its network. AT&T has also urged employees to send personal letters to the Federal Communications Commission arguing against net neutrality.

Despite previous actions, it isn't that surprising the company would approve of the Google-Verizon framework. That's because by the end of 2009, AT&T changed its position on net neutrality. In fact, it had adopted at least one view similar to those found in the Google-Verizon proposal.

In a letter to FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski, AT&T said, "preserving the open character of the Internet is critically important." However, unlike Google and Verizon, AT&T wanted the FCC to address complaints of anticompetitive or discriminatory behavior on a case-by-case basis instead of applying a "strict nondiscrimination standard." Broad net neutrality rules, AT&T argued, could "ban voluntary commercial agreements for ... certain value-added broadband services."

AT&T's reference to "value-added broadband services" is similar to Google and Verizon's call to have a non-neutral broadband network for "additional, differentiated online services." As mentioned earlier, such services could include health care monitoring, educational tools, gaming, and other forms of entertainment content.That means they could charge you more for accessing the net for those functions.

Considering AT&T's previous calls against regulating private broadband services (not to mention it's clear interest in having an unregulated wireless network) it's no surprise that AT&T likes what the Google-Verizon plan offers. But the company hasn't signed on entirely; its support is

preliminary, not a Verizon-Google-AT&T net neutrality proposal.

US Congress Letter Stirs ’Net Neutrality’ Debate

Four members of Congress have bashed a "net neutrality" proposal made by Google and Verizon, calling on US regulators to find their own way to insure all data is treated equally online.

"Rather than expansion upon a proposal by two large communications companies with a vested financial interest in the outcome, formal FCC action is needed," the legislators said in a letter to Federal Communications Commission chairman Julius Genachowski.

A copy of the letter available online Tuesday was signed by congressional Democrats Anna Eshoo, Edward Markey, Mike Doyle and Jan Inslee.

The lawmakers condemned any paid prioritization of data routed over the Internet and called for wireless and wired connections to be held to the same standards of openness.

"These types of arrangements, whether they are called paid prioritization or fast lanes, harm the Internet," the legislators argued in the letter. "A common-sense non-discrimination requirement without loopholes is essential."

They also rejected the idea of allowing carriers that provide wireless Internet service to provide "managed services" such as mobile television programs out of concern the data might win priority treatment.

"An overly broad interpretation of managed services would create an exception that swallows the rule," the legislators maintained.

"For example, managed services might be rebranded or repackaged services and applications - only with priority treatment not available to competitors."

The foursome did agree with Google and Verizon when it came to giving the FCC the power to regulate Internet service providers (ISPs).

Google and US telecom giant Verizon last week proposed a framework that would ban "undue discrimination against any lawful Internet content" and give the FCC exclusive authority to enforce the rules.

The influential companies said their proposal was intended to kick-start stalled efforts to figure out how US regulators should or could keep ISPs from giving preferential treatment to some data at the expense of other bytes of information.

In April, a US appeals court dealt a major setback to the FCC’s efforts to force ISPs to treat all Web traffic equally.

The court decided that the FCC had not been granted the legal authority by Congress to regulate the network management practices of ISPs.

"We’re not so presumptuous to think that any two businesses could, or should, decide the future of this issue," Google media counsel Richard Whitt said in a blog post.

"We’re simply trying to offer a proposal to help resolve a debate which has largely stagnated after five years."

The proposal has prompted parties ranging from Internet freedom advocates to online social networking star Facebook and US telecom powerhouse AT&T to weigh in.

Recommending that wireless Internet connections be exempt from net neutrality rules played into fears that Google is changing allegiance in the battle to stop ISPs from giving preferential treatment to those that pay.

"It’s true that Google previously has advocated for certain openness safeguards to be applied in a similar fashion to what would be applied to wireline services," Whitt said.

"However, in the spirit of compromise, we have agreed to a proposal that allows this market to remain free from regulation for now, while Congress keeps a watchful eye."

The proposal would continue to allow broadband service providers to freely offer "additional services" such as Verizon FIOS TV, which is currently available on smartphones.

"Broadband providers could offer a special gaming channel, or a more secure banking service, or a home health monitoring capability - so long as such offerings are separate and apart from the public Internet," Whitt said.

Critics worried that such services might become a non-public parallel wireless Internet where data could get special handling.

Intel Buys McAfee for $7.7B in Push Beyond PCs

Talk about a new meaning for "Intel Inside."

Intel Corp. wants to be inside your television. And your cell phone. And your car. And pretty much any other device that could one day connect to the Internet and require a computer chip.

And with its deal to buy McAfee Inc. for $7.68 billion, the world’s No. 1 semiconductor company now wants to sell you security software as well - in all those places.

The all-cash deal announced Thursday marks the biggest acquisition in Intel’s 42-year history, an expensive example of Intel’s commitment to sell more than chips for personal computers and servers. It is the sixth biggest deal globally between two technology companies over the past 3 1/2 years, according to Capital IQ, a division of Standard & Poor’s.

But the deal is also a reminder of Intel’s inconsistency in finding new ways to grow. The company is an infrequent acquirer with a history of dabbling in, and retreating from, markets outside its core business. It once even had a toy division that made microscopes and other gadgets - a project Intel eventually gave up because of poor sales.

Once the deal closes, as expected, McAfee would help Intel improve the security of its chips, which are currently inside about 80 percent of the world's PCs and servers. It also would open a new revenue stream for Intel, which plans to sell McAfee's software alongside its chips for PCs and other Internet-connected devices.

Joint products from the companies won't appear until next year. When they do, the most noticeable result for consumers would likely be sales pitches for security software in unexpected places.

"Everywhere we sell a microprocessor, there's an opportunity for a security software sale to go with it," Intel CEO Paul Otellini said on a conference call with analysts. "It's not just the opportunity to co-sell, it's the opportunity to deeply integrate these into the architecture of our products."

The price Intel is paying - $48 per share - represents a 60 percent premium over McAfee's Wednesday close of $29.93.

The announcement worried some Intel investors because it takes Intel so far afield of what it's best at, which is making microprocessors, the "brains" of computers. Intel shares fell 63 cents, or 3.2 percent, to $18.96.

Some analysts questioned the wisdom of buying McAfee when Intel could have gotten many of the same technical gains by continuing the two companies' partnership. Intel said it has been working closely with McAfee for the last year and a half to improve the security of both companies' products.

Others praised the deal as giving Intel an edge over other chip-makers in markets where Intel is weak, such as cell phones, where chips that use less power than Intel's are more popular.

Analyst Tristan Gerra with Robert W. Baird & Co. said the deal addresses rising security concerns among makers of non-PC computers and gives Intel "significant security advantages" over chip-makers who have to rely on third parties for the security software they bundle and sell to device makers.

Intel's chips already have a significant amount of security features. McAfee's technology should help strengthen those features and fine-tune them for the new devices that Intel is targeting - even if consumers don't buy additional security software.

Intel doesn't need the bump from McAfee immediately, having booked its biggest quarterly net income in a decade in the April-June period. But just as PC makers are desperate to broaden their reach as phones and other devices replace certain types of computers, Intel wants to make sure its chips end up inside the next generation of Internet-connected devices.

Intel said the deal would hurt earnings slightly in the first year the companies are combined, or help earnings slightly if certain costs and one-time items connected to the acquisition are excluded.

Both boards unanimously approved the deal. It still needs approval from regulators and McAfee shareholders, but analysts do not expect problems. Intel did not say when it believes the deal would close. Both companies are based in Santa Clara, Calif.

Intel has traveled this road before.

Before McAfee, Intel's biggest acquisition was its $2.14 billion takeover of Level One Communications in 1999, part of a multibillion-dollar spending spree during the dot-com heyday to beef up Intel's lineup of communications chips. That effort ended with Intel selling most of those businesses in 2006 for $600 million.

The sell-off illustrated a broader purging by Intel as its finances were suffering under an assault from a scrappy, smaller rival, Advanced Micro Devices Inc., and its encroachment on Intel's turf in server chips. AMD also found another way to hurt Intel: Its complaints about Intel's sales tactics got Intel in trouble with antitrust regulators around the world.

Intel is fighting a record $1.45 billion antitrust fine in Europe and separate cases in South Korea and New York state. Earlier this month, it squashed the harshest antitrust case it has faced yet by settling with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission. Last year it also settled with AMD for $1.25 billion.

McAfee has about 6,100 employees and $1.93 billion in revenue last year. Intel had 79,800 employees and $35.13 billion in revenue.

Protect Your Network from Facebook Malware

Reports are circulating of yet another malware scam targeting Facebook users. The sheer size of the social network, combined with the inherent trust users place in messages from friends and family through Facebook make it a prime target for malware attacks to exploit.

AppRiver report that they are detecting a new malware campaign targeting Facebook. The campaign tricks unsuspecting users into thinking the message is coming from Facebook. The e-mail appears to be an official Facebook notification indicating the reader can reconnect with friends, but the message is full of malicious links. Clicking on one of the malicious links will then redirect them through several different Web sites and load malware onto their computer through a hidden iframe exploit.

So, what's the big deal? Is this Facebook malware attack any different than every other malicious attempt to exploit social networks? An AppRiver spokesperson explains "What's unique here is that this virus campaign is also hitting smartphone devices (specifically BlackBerrys at this time) that have the Facebook application/icon installed. In other words, it's not just utilizing email, but also triggering the application itself to make the campaign more believable."

The AppRiver spokesperson added "Since the actual payload is not pushed down until after the infection occurs, this is a great opportunity for scammers to test the lengths of their campaign. For instance, if scammers can hook applications in this fashion, it may be an indicator of what's to come in the future: an easier remote mobile device security breach. If successful, scammers may one day be able to send payloads to attack the mobile device causing a potentially severe data breach."

AppRiver blocked approximately 15,000 messages - or 133 per minute - related to this attack. As of this morning, though, there appears to be a lull in

activity.

Dave Marcus, Director of McAfee Labs Security Research Communications, offers this insight. "Malware and scams that target Facebook users are a very common occurrence in today’s threat landscape. With upwards of 500 million users, cybercriminals will continue to target Facebook users and abuse the Facebook brand itself as the social engineering lure in their various criminal schemes."

Marcus advises "Today’s users need to understand the risks associated with surfing the internet in an unprotected or uneducated manner. Today’s Internet users need to look at safe searching technologies, comprehensive security suites that are configured correctly and updated daily, perform regular daily scans of their computers and even develop a healthy skepticism of what winds up in their various inboxes."

Organizations could just implement policies prohibiting the use of social networking in the workplace, or block access to social network sites from the network. For companies that allow users to connect to social network sites from work, though, IT admins need to ensure that users are educated about the nature of potential threats, and condition them to exercise caution and view incoming communications with a degree of suspicion - even if they appear to be from a trusted source.

Ika-tako Virus Replaces Your Files With Octopus Photos

It s always frustrating to find that your computer has been infected with a virus, especially one that can potentially wipe your files. However one hacker decided that he would bring a little humor to viruses by replacing any infected file with a particularly cute sea creature anime.

The Ika-tako virus (which is Japanese for Squid-Octopus) as it has been named first came to shore in May via Japanese file sharing Website Winny. Since then, it has reportedly gone on to infect somewhere between 20,000 and 50,000 computers, according to Asahi.com.

The virus disguises itself in music files, which users then download. Once the file is played, the malware runs through the computer s hard drive, infecting anything from family photos to important OS files. The infected files are swapped with the squid, octopus or sea urchin pictures and removed, then supposedly sent to the hacker’s server.

The good news is that the hacker, Masato Nakatsuji, was found and arrested. It s not the first time this guy has been arrested for malware creation either - he was convicted for crafting a similar virus back in 2008, but had used images from the copyrighted anime cartoon Clannad. He reportedly told police this time that he wanted to see "how much my computer programming skills had improved since the last time I was arrested.’

This time, he was arrested on the grounds of property destruction, a first for police in Tokyo. At least he handmade the images himself this time I guess.

Unfortunately there is no known fix for the virus just yet, so bad news for those already infected, unless police can get into the server he set up. However, considering he had thousands of people’s information stored on the server, it shouts to me that there was a bigger motive behind this

virus that just practicing his computer skills.

Feds: No Charges in Pennsylvania School Laptop-Spying Case

Federal prosecutors will not file charges against a school district or its employees over the use of software to remotely monitor students.

U.S. Attorney Zane David Memeger says investigators have found no evidence of criminal intent by Lower Merion School District employees who activated tracking software that took thousands of webcam and screenshot images on school-provided laptops.

A student and his family sued the district in February, claiming officials invaded his privacy by activating the software. That case continues.

The district has acknowledged capturing 56,000 screen shots and webcam images so it could locate missing laptops.

Memeger says he decided to make Tuesday’s announcement to close the matter before the start of the school year.

Google CEO Exposes Dark Side of Social Networking

Google CEO Eric Schmidt fears that too much information is shared online, and predicts that people will one day change their name and reinvent themselves in order to escape their digital past. That point of view might be extreme, but it is true that social networking has forced us to more closely examine and redefine the concepts of privacy and identity.

There are many exciting benefits to the evolution of the Web and the rise of social networking. Facebook and Twitter have enabled people to reconnect with friends and family, and provide a platform for sharing information and staying in touch. The real-time aspect of social network status updates has also transformed online search and breaking news.

The problem is that social networking also provides a very powerful tool for embarrassing yourself or ruining your reputation on a global and virtually eternal scale. Once you put it online, it is shared around the world in seconds, and can still be recalled after decades.

It is not uncommon now for the job application process to include sharing your social networking account information. Tech savvy employers want to be able to check out your Facebook profile and your tweet history on Twitter.

What you say and how you act online says a lot about you. Examining your online persona gives employers a raw and unfiltered glimpse at who you really are, and is a much more effective tool for screening potential employees than the psychological personality or aptitude tests relied on in years gone by.

There is a long and growing list of stories of people losing their job as a result of Facebook status updates or Twitter tweets. It is generally a bad idea to bad mouth your boss or your job on a social networking site, or to post pics and status updates about how much fun you’re having at the beach

after you called in sick.

One poor soul learned this lesson the hard way - possibly costing him a job at Cisco before he even started. Employers are watching, so letting the world know that you hate the job you have been offered is a quick way to get that offer rescinded.

It’s all about who you know. In this case, who you know could make or break whether or not you can get a loan. Some banks are using services like Rapleaf to scan your social network and identify contacts connected with you that also do business with the financial institution. Based on the financial stability and credit history of your social network connections, the bank can make an assumption about what sort of credit risk you might be.

It seems fair to assume that your spouse would be a Facebook friend, and a part of your Twitterverse. Why not? Love is grand, and you want to share everything with your partner...until you don’t. If the relationship goes south, you may want to unfriend your ex and be careful what you say online.

A Time Magazine article explains "Lawyers, however, love these sites, which can be evidentiary gold mines. Did your husband’s new girlfriend Twitter about getting a piece of jewelry? The court might regard that as marital assets being disbursed to a third party. Did your wife tell the court she’s incapable of getting a job? Then your lawyer should ask why she’s pursuing job interviews through LinkedIn."

You’re probably familiar with the phrase "an elephant never forgets". Well, the Internet never forgets and it has zettabytes of archived storage capacity that can be searched in seconds thanks to companies like Google. I don’t recommend changing your identity to try and dodge your digital past, but I do recommend exercising a modicum of discretion and common sense regarding what you post online.

German Robber Nabbed after Mocking Police in Email

A German bank robber led his pursuers straight to him after taunting police in an email over their efforts to catch him. Authorities in the southern city of Wuerzburg said on Wednesday the 19-year-old sent emails to police and two newspapers to point out factual errors in the report of his bank raid in the town of Roettingen a week ago.

According to daily Bild, he mocked the police for getting his age, height and accent wrong then pointed out he escaped in a car, not on foot.

"His game of cat and mouse went all wrong," a Wuerzburg police spokesman said.

Police traced his email and arrested him in a gambling hall in Hamburg just a few hours later.

"He was completely shocked," the spokesman said.

ISP’s Top Data Hog Gobbles 2.7TB of Data in a Month

ISPs sometimes complain about "data hogs," often in the service of ridiculously tight-fisted data caps on Internet service. But there are users who deserve the porcine label, and Belgian ISP Telenet recently offered a rare picture of them. Can you imagine downloading 2,680GB of data in a single month?

One Belgian can. Between July 4 and August 6 of this year, Telenet's single largest user slurped up 2.7TB of data. He was followed by similarly impressive downloaders who transferred 1.9TB, 1.5TB, and 1.3 TB.

These numbers drop off quickly, though. Only a single user on the entire network topped 2TB in a month, while another seven topped 1TB.

Telenet recently published a list of its top 25 downloaders to a discussion forum, but the goal wasn't to demonize the users. Instead, it was to show other people just how much data could be transferred in a single month. The ISP hopes to encourage people to migrate up from its least-expensive plans (with 50GB and 80GB data caps, respectively) to its more expensive "fair use" plans.
Telenet's various tiers (note data caps)

In this case, "fair use" doesn't refer to copyright but to downloading. Telenet doesn't want to call its plans "unlimited," but it does say that "'fair use' means that you can send and receive a very large quantity of data via the Telenet network. Telenet will only ask you to adjust your consumption in the case of excessive volume consumption that may threaten the comfort of other subscribers."

If you turn out to be an "excessive" user (double the average data use for your speed tier), Telenet can throttle you down to 512 Kbps until your next billing period begins. Oh, and subscribers can only use this bandwidth to "disseminate legal data."

According to Rudolf van der Berg, a Dutch Internet consultant and policy analyst, Telenet has the fastest network in the area, so this list "pretty much is the top 25 [downloaders] for Belgium."

Still, the Belgians have nothing on Americans when it comes to downloads. One US ISP told me last year that a single user had transferred 4TB of data in a single month from a consumer Internet account, and we've received reports from readers who have been warned by their ISPs after sucking a cool terabyte of data down their home pipes in a month.

Such numbers are outliers, of course. ISPs have told us that average broadband user is in the range of 2-6GB per user, but you can see why some ISPs like Comcast prefer to set high monthly limits to rein in the few peak users, who can use more bandwidth (and, more importantly, cause more local congestion on a cable line) than hundreds of other customers combined.

Internet Explorer Turns 15

Microsoft's web browser Internet Explorer was launched 15 years ago. While it has had its ups and downs over the years - version 6 was plagued by countless security issues, which made it one of the most hated browsers around - it's still the most popular browser in the world, with the last couple of versions improving dramatically on their troubled predecessor.

The first version of the browser, Internet Explorer 1, debuted on August 16, 1995. It was based on Mosaic, a web browser Microsoft had licensed from a company called Spyglass Inc. Starting with version 3.0, Microsoft started bundling Internet Explorer with Windows, increasing its market share dramatically and ultimately squeezing once dominant browser Netscape Navigator out of the market completely.

Internet Explorer's market dominance started to wane with the rise of popularity of Firefox, a free, open source browser which was launched in 2004, largely as an answer to the problematic IE6. After a couple of years of (somewhat inexplicable) negligence, Microsoft started working hard on improving Internet Explorer again, with version 7 launched as a big improvement on IE6 when it comes to security and stability.

According to the latest data from Net Applications, Internet Explorer now has a combined market share of 60.74%, Firefox is at 23.75% followed by Chrome, Safari, Opera and others.

Right now, Microsoft is preparing for the launch of the next chapter in Internet Explorer history: Internet Explorer 9. The first public beta of the new browser is scheduled to be launched at an event in San Francisco on September 15. With the competition being as strong as it is, IE is one of Microsoft's most important products; we're keen to find out what the Internet Explorer team has prepared for us this time.

AOL's Patch Plans 500 Local Sites by End of Year

AOL intends to grow its Patch network of community news sites to include more than 500 neighborhoods by the end of December - a move the struggling Internet company hopes will strengthen its online advertising business.

AOL Inc. announced the expansion plan Tuesday for Patch, which it bought last June for $7 million in cash as part of its yearslong effort to reinvent itself as a content provider reliant on online ads as its legacy dial-up Internet access business fades. AOL, which split from Time Warner Inc. in late 2009, said in a March regulatory filing that it expects to invest as much as $50 million in Patch this year alone.

AOL CEO Tim Armstrong came up with the idea for Patch in 2007, while he was still an executive at Google Inc., and was an early stakeholder in the company through his private investment company, Polar Capital. When AOL bought Patch, Armstrong said that he wouldn't take a profit from the deal and instead his initial investment would be repaid in AOL stock once AOL became independent of Time Warner.

Patch launched its first three websites in early 2009. Since then, the company has been rolling out more sites at a rapid clip: AOL also said Tuesday that it launched Morristown Patch, which focuses on Morristown, N.J., bringing its current stable of Patch sites to 100.

Patch sites now serve communities in eight states, including Skokie, Ill. and Mill Valley, Ca.; by the end of the year, AOL plans to have Patch sites in 20 states.

Patch builds its websites in communities with 15,000-75,000 residents, and each site is staffed by a full-time editor who works with an average of 11 local freelancers to create and produce site content. Content

ranges from news stories to events listings to classified ads.

Like other AOL websites such as gadget blog Engadget and video search engine Truveo, Patch sites make money from running ads. In an interview, Patch CEO Jon Brod said AOL sees local websites as the "largest commercial opportunity online that's yet to be won."

Facebook 'Dislike' Button Is a Scam, Security Expert Says

A "dislike" button has been on many Facebook users' wish lists, but a "dislike" app currently making the rounds on the social-networking site is actually a scam that will spread virally on your Facebook account.

The app will "trick you into giving a rogue Facebook application permission to access your profile, posting spam messages from your account and asking you to complete an online survey," Graham Cluley, a senior technology consultant at Sophos, wrote in a blog post.

The scam is spreading through users' status updates, so their friends will think the offer is legitimate. Some messages say "I just got the Dislike button, so I can dislike all of your dumb posts lol!!" or "Get the official Dislike button NOW!" - followed by a link.

If you click on the link, you'll be forwarded to Facebook's permission-based approval menu, which will request access to your basic information, permission to post on your Wall, and access to your data at any time.

"If you do give the app permission to run, it silently updates your Facebook status to promote the link that tricked you in the first place, thus spreading the message virally to your Facebook friends and online contacts," Cluley wrote.

To get the actual "dislike" button, however, users have to fill out an online survey - which is how the scammers make their money. After that, users are pointed to a Firefox browser add-on developed by FaceMod, which will install the "dislike" button.

FaceMod, however, does not appear to be involved in the scam. "Their browser add-on is simply being used as bait," Cluley wrote.

Sophos has not verified the FaceMod app to see if it works, Cluley said, but if you are interested in using the company's app, it is advisable to download it directly from FaceMod and avoid links from Facebook.

During an interview with ABC's Diane Sawyer last month, Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg said the "dislike" button is "something that we would definitely think about," but he did not commit to adding it to the site.

"We're working hard to block and remove malicious applications that claim to provide dislike functionality and inadvertently update people's statuses," a Facebook spokesman said in a statement. "It's important to keep in mind that there is no official dislike button. Also, don't click on strange links, even if they are from friends, and notify the person and report the link if you see something suspicious."

FaceMod did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

NYC Woman to Google: Who’s Posting Trash About Me?

A business consultant wants a court to force YouTube and owner Google to unmask a cyber cipher who posted what she says are unauthorized videos of her and online comments that hurt her reputation.

Carla Franklin, a former model and actress turned MBA, said in a legal petition filed Monday that she believes a Google user or users impugned her sexual mores in comments made under pseudonyms on a Columbia Business School website. Franklin says someone also posted unauthorized YouTube clips of her appearing in a small-budget independent movie.

Mountain View, Calif.-based Google Inc. said in a statement that it doesn’t discuss individual cases to protect users’ privacy, but it follows applicable laws.

The postings caused Franklin "personal humiliation" and hurt her professional prospects as she was job-hunting after graduating from the Ivy League business school in 2009, her legal papers say.

The video clips were innocuous but unauthorized, and she found it creepy that someone had unearthed the film and posted pieces in an apparent effort to make her uncomfortable, her lawyer, David M. Fish, said Tuesday.

Anonymity is a cherished and staunchly defended refuge for many Internet users. But a growing number of people and businesses have tried to force blogs, websites and other online entities to disclose who’s trashing them, and some have succeeded.

In one case that grabbed headlines, Vogue cover model Liskula Cohen successfully sued Google in a state court in Manhattan last year to get the name of a blogger who had published comments about Cohen’s hygiene and sexual habits.

Cohen argued that the comments on the site were defamatory. The blogger, ultimately identified by court order as Rosemary Port, said her privacy was violated, and she had a right to her opinions.

Franklin’s petition, also filed in state court in Manhattan, cites the Cohen case and argues that Franklin, too, was defamed by postings that "called into question her chastity."

Google’s statement noted that the online giant scrutinizes all court orders for compliance with "both the letter and the spirit of the law" and can object or ask to have such orders narrowed.

"We have a track record of advocating on behalf of our users," the company said.

Franklin believes she knows who posted the material about her but wants to be certain before publicly naming names, her lawyer said.

Her petition doesn’t involve Columbia; the school isn’t believed to have the identity information she wants, Fish said. A spokeswoman for the school didn’t immediately return an after-hours telephone message left Tuesday.

Now working for a consulting firm that advises nonprofit organizations, "she really just wants this exposed, done, so that whoever's doing it will never do it again," Fish said. "She really doesn't want any of this negative stuff following her."

=~=~=~=

Atari Online News, Etc. is a weekly publication covering the entire Atari community. Reprint permission is granted, unless otherwise noted at the beginning of any article, to Atari user groups and not for profit publications only under the following terms: articles must remain unedited and include the issue number and author at the top of each article reprinted. Other reprints granted upon approval of request. Send requests to: dpj@atarinews.org

No issue of Atari Online News, Etc. may be included on any commercial media, nor uploaded or transmitted to any commercial online service or internet site, in whole or in part, by any agent or means, without the expressed consent or permission from the Publisher or Editor of Atari Online News, Etc.

Opinions presented herein are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the staff, or of the publishers. All material herein is believed to be accurate at the time of publishing.